

City Life Seven Thousand Years Ago

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The German mail steamer which has just arrived in New York City brings a message from the beginnings of civilization through Prof. H. V. Hilprecht of the University of Pennsylvania, whose remarkable discoveries on the site of ancient Nippur have been of such great archaeological value and interest. It is fully expected that his report of what he has found in old Babylonia in his most recent excavations will project the history of mankind backward into the past, several thousand years beyond the beginnings heretofore assigned to it. Enough information from the work at Nippur has found its way to Philadelphia to show that ten thousand years ago (centuries prior to the old-time date of the creation) there existed a civilization as comprehensive as our own, a commercial system built on "mod-

ern lines," an exalted patronage of art and letters; a far-seeing appreciation of the good opinion of posterity; people then went to war on the same pretenses that animate modern armies; they had libraries in which were dictionaries, histories, etc.; public museums in which were paintings, sculpture, archaeological specimens; they used machinery for making earthen pots and platters; they did exquisite enameling; their architecture included palaces at least two stories high, covering the extent of a modern city block and having a drainage system in which a resemblance in principle to some recorded patents can be traced; their scientists studied astronomy and speculated on the movements of the stars; the educated went in for special religious cults and looked down upon those pagans who were without the law; the rich wore jewelry which a modern goldsmith might be proud to make and they lived in the cities during the season, leaving their estates in the malarious country districts to the care of agents. But most marvelous of all, with the evidence that this ancient civilization differed but little from our own is incorporated the belief that even then it must already have been in process of formation as many years as have elapsed between that day and our day.

So, in anticipation of the tale he will tell,



EXCAVATIONS AT NIPPUR, SHOWING ANCIENT WELL OR DRAIN LEADING DOWN TO THE BEGINNING OF CIVILIZATION.

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Honored by the Sultan.

Naturally the discoverer of this old world holds an exalted place among archaeologists. Already he has been honored in Europe by the sultan of Turkey, who has conferred a decoration upon him, and by the German universities, which are vying with one another in flattering offers of professorships and doctorates. Now Prof. Hilprecht is a German of the Germans and these Teutonic favors, which have come from the emperor down, must be very tempting to him. But in spite of them he has declared his allegiance to his American college, and the gain to the latter can be gauged from the fact that he has declared the mounds of Nippur to be so extensive that at least a dozen years will be required to complete the work of excavation. The man is as interesting as his work, for the latter is the direct result of his personality. The mounds of Nippur were known to students perhaps before Hilprecht was born, and even after they were opened and some of their contents scrutinized their importance was not fully realized until this almost unknown student pieced the fragments into a wonderful mosaic of the early history of the world. And since then it has been his astute diplomacy, his unflinching courage and his scientific acumen which have brought forth this veritable sermon in stones triumphing over many difficulties.

Other seats of learning in other countries have striven mightily to win the Ottoman consent to their delving in Nippur. The

scholars are brushing up on his past achievements. It is a fascinating story and here are its outlines: Ancient Nippur, or, as it was called during the days of its prosperity, Kengi, is situated on a marshy plain in Mesopotamia, about two days' ride on horseback from Bagdad. When the explorers first went there they saw only great mounds of sand, acres and acres in extent, rising out of the plain. Arab tribes had their camps among these sand piles, and in places they had burrowed into the piles short distances in quest of the curious tablets which occasionally cropped out on the surface, and which brought a small sum from dealers in Constantinople and elsewhere. Some of these Arabs were employed at sums greater than they had ever earned for like periods in their lives to dig into the mounds and carry the sand away in baskets and dump it in the marsh far out on the plain. From an arid waste the place came to take on an air of bustling activity, and soon walls, rooms, storehouses, pottery, tablets and other things that had been buried for centuries began to be found in an abundance that surprised and delighted the explorers.

On the surface of the sand piles were found pottery and small objects of various character, some of which were lettered in a way to let the scientists know that they had been dropped by the Jews, who lived on the mound in the manner of the present-day Arab, as late as 800 A. D. But, once the first layer of sand was removed, and old walls made their appearance, the objects picked up showed the excavators that they were amid the ruins of a city which evidently flourished centuries before Christ. Bricks were picked up marked Ashurbanapal, a king who lived prior to 600 B. C. The value of this find was eclipsed, however, by the discovery of objects which evidently belonged to the reign of one King Kalsashman-Turgu, who flourished 1400 B. C. Scattered around in profusion were the remains of many objects belonging to that time, and when the find was announced, with the many evidences of the culture and progress of the time, the world in general compared it easily with the Greek and Roman chronology, and found it not so hard to look back these few additional years.

Remains of Hidden Temple.

But further along in the report it was stated that below the temple platform on which the relics were found were discovered the remains of another temple, which must have been built in the reign of King Ur-Gur, many centuries before Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation, was born. Then the world wondered. There was very little, unless it might be the creation itself, to compare with this.

And later, when the platform of Ur-Gur had been broken through, still another temple was found; this one built in the

reign of Sargon I, and Narim Sin, 3800 B. C. Now, bible scholars had read of this King Sargon, but the evidence of his existence was not very strong, and he was thought by many to be a myth. Dr. Hilprecht found his name stamped into thousands of bricks. Even this was not the last, for one day the explorers broke through the platform of Sargon, and there, lying on the ground, were vestiges of what has since proved to be a civilization that existed over 7,000 years ago. They had gone through to virgin soil, and in the hole they found evidence that it was the site of the ancient city of Calneh, mentioned in Genesis. A pile of sun-dried brick at one side of the hole, when dug out, was found to be an altar, on which the ashes of a last sacrifice were still lying several inches thick. And there were terra cotta vases and some pottery of such pronounced beauty that Prof. Hilprecht says it would have been called Grecian had it been found under less positive conditions. There was a keystone arch also, although it had previously been held that keystone arches were of Roman invention, and finally, most important of all, many fragments of tablets, which, when

conclusively that it had at least two stories. One window, the only one preserved on this side of the structure, was found. We excavated a few rooms. The floors were carefully laid with baked brick.

"In the rooms were found a number of pre-Sargonic tablets, a seal, a very ancient seal impression in clay, showing an eagle with outspread wings, recognized from similar figures on the monuments of Tello, and a few other objects of peculiar character. At the west wing was a well, built of characteristic pre-Sargonic bricks. A large vase and cup were found nearby standing on a little platform. Many traces of the pre-Sargonic period have been discovered, among them are seven large fragments of a limestone relief representing a battle scene. We have found so many pre-Sargonic structures at so many different places in Nippur that we begin gradually to understand what importance the city must have had in possessing the chief and most revered shrine in all Babylonia."

In another letter Dr. Hilprecht states that he discovered the temple library. It was in a separate library building and it contained 23,000 tablets inscribed with a history of the time and of times then long gone by. When they are all translated it is probable they will extend our knowledge of man far beyond the conquests of Lugalzaggisi.

An Extensive Walled City.

So, what Lugalzaggisi found and what Dr. Hilprecht uncovered was an extensive walled city, with great gates carved with a definite idea of art; a king's palace which for size and beauty would compare with modern structures of this kind; a government library, in which the history of the nation was indelibly cut into tablets and the latter stored away on ledges around the walls; an appreciation of good living as evinced in the remains of private dwellings, in one of which a kitchen was found in an excellent state of preservation; in short, a city laid out and operated on a modern basis in the days when man heretofore was supposed to be not much more advanced than the beasts of the field. Furthermore, these people had in them the vital spark of patriotism, the most convincing evidence of their civilization, for hardly had the heel of the oppressor been removed from their neck by the death of the world conqueror than they arose and forcibly reclaimed their ancient rights from his successors.

Now, this outline of the discoveries of Dr. Hilprecht has led the reader so rapidly back through the millenniums as to suggest the possibility of gaps in the succession, but Nippur is an inscribed monument of the history of the world and the diggings are revealing the evidence of the successive centuries with the regularity of a carefully numbered folio. Only it is the early pages in which the world is most interested, the record of that civilization which existed long previous to 5000 B. C. It is of this wonderful period that Dr. Hilprecht is coming home to speak and it is because it will bring us many millenniums nearer to our origin that his words will be regarded as are those of an oracle.

Quaint Features of Life

Nearly thirty years ago Jonas Silverman, a farmer living near Springfield, O., was swindled out of \$1,500 by sharpers while on a train near Valparaiso, Ind. The criminals escaped and ere long one of them died. The other two drifted to the Klondike a year or two ago, became rich and have just returned to the states. They hunted up Mr. Silverman, paid him the \$1,500 and gave him \$1,000 more by way of interest on the forced loan.

Some German brokers engaged in promoting an "Industrial" company advertised that the enterprise promised to pay 5 per cent the first year and more later on. The public invested, but failed to get any dividends. Then some of the investors sued to recover their money, claiming that it had been obtained by false pretenses. After winning a compromise verdict they appealed and a decision has been rendered in a higher court ordering return of their money on surrender of the stock.

The Middlesex probate court at East Cambridge, Mass., has been called upon to decide whether or not a certain church is "visible." It seems that a deceased member of the Independent Baptist church of Woburn left a trust fund of \$1,000 for the benefit of her fellow members, the interest to be paid to them so long as the church "maintained its visibility and the doctrine of the old school Baptist principles." The residuary legatees, to whom the money was to revert if at any time the church should forfeit the title to it, claim that the society no longer "maintains its visibility." It has

only nine members, only one of whom lives in Woburn, and it does not support a preacher. On the other hand, the society claims that, according to its doctrines, it is still a church within the meaning of the testator.

Mrs. Henrietta Chase of Danbury, Conn., died recently, leaving quite a little property to various persons. To Alanson Chase, who was supposed to be her favorite nephew, she bequeathed "my set of false teeth, which will be found in the upper right-hand drawer of my bureau." The young man at once concluded that his aunt must have concealed some diamonds or other precious stones in the set of teeth. Accordingly he smashed up his bequest, but found no jewels. He will now contest the will.

The following epitaph is found on a tombstone in a graveyard in Winslow, Me.: "Here lies the body of Richard Thomas, An Englishman by birth. A whig of '76. By occupation a cooper. Now food for worms. Like an old rum puncheon, marked, numbered and shooed. He will be raised again and finished by his Creator. He died September 28, 1824, aged 75. America, my adopted country, my best advice to you is this: Take care of your liberties."

"We, the jury, find for the defendant," was the verdict in the case of the estate of Mrs. Lizzie Doty of Mexico, Mo., against the Monumental Bronze company of Bridgeport, Conn. Mrs. Doty ordered a \$384 bronze monument erected at the grave of her parents with the inscription:

The Lord is my Shepherd,
I shall not want.

The engraver made it read "fear" instead of "want" and the estate refused to pay the bill and a law suit followed. The judge instructed the jury that if it considered it a material variance from the words of the palmetist it should find for the defendant and it did so.

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